5; Spittel D-5 (ca. 1950) 1965 AX5 Vedda AX5

123 We had hardly gained the base of the rock when we heard human
[411] voices and soon came up with three men and their dogs. One fellow
412] carried a gun, the others had axes hitched to their shoulders. They were on their way to a devil dancing ceremony at a house of illness some miles away; but abandoning their project they accompanied us to their homes.

621 In a small clearing stood half a dozen leafy shelters. Outside one of
[342] these, three women with infants at the breast were seated roasting small yellow flowers. The rest of their people were at work on a *chena** close
[162] by. We summoned them and soon we had all the Veddas of the *Kotgaha*
[164] *Ulpotta* before us—some six or eight men and about a dozen women and children. They were a poor lot bearing the stigmata of malaria and
● [146] framboesia. There was but one old man among them. The children were emaciated and languid.

144 Most of them showed strong traces of Tamil admixture, especially
177 the women; what poor ornaments they wore, their clothing, and even their very names were Tamil; and so were their predilections if the coy smiles one or two of them bestowed on the fine Tamil that accompanied us signified anything. There were at least three men, however, true to
142 Vedda type—short of stature, wild-eyed, with beardless face and upstanding frizzly hair.

411 They had no bows among them, except as playthings for the children,
524 but made us one as a memento and stained it with charcoal and *thimbiri* to give it the appearance of use.

342 The huts were fashioned of wattle and leaves, and thatched with dry
415 grass. Their domestic appointments comprised earthen pots, a wooden pestle and mortar, bark rope, and a deer skin or two.

262 Fruits, flowers, wild yams, honey, the flesh of animals, *kurrukkan*†
224 and maize formed their food. The meat they fancied most was that of
231 the langur and monitor lizard which they hunted with the lazy mongrels that loitered about. They eat abundantly and at any hour when food
264 is plentiful; but as a rule one good meal a day is all they expect; in
26] times of dearth they bear hunger stoically, chewing incessantly a few
415 varieties of bark they carry in pouches fashioned of cloth saturated with melted wax (*ilee velhee*). Partial nomads, they spend many months
221 of the year under trees and in caves. Where the *palu*, *veera*, *kong*, or
222 *mora*‡ fruit is ripe, where the hives are, there they take their women and children, dogs, and chattels and go.

515 "How often do you bathe?" I asked one of them, the smell of their ring-wormed bodies suggesting little acquaintance with water.

"What bathing for us," he replied. "We fall into a stream once in a way and get out again; that is our bath. And we only do that when our stomachs are full. When we are hungry we don't care for anything; we can eat even a man then!"

504 In answer to the question how they measured distances and what constituted a mile, the reply was, "We walk till our legs hurt, then we
[276] place our axes on the ground, sit down, take out our pouches, and chew a quid; that is our mile".

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[137] *A patch of forest cleared for cultivation

†*Eleusine coracana*

‡*Mimusops hexandra*, *Homicystis tuberia*, *Schleichera trijuga*, *Naphelium longana*, respectively.